

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTICE.

The Instructive Picture Book ; or, a few attractive Lessons from the Natural History of Animals. By ADAM WHITE, Assistant Zoological Department, British Museum, &c. &c. Third Edition, with many Illustrations by J. B. and others. Edinburgh : Edmonston and Douglas, 1859.

THIS is no ordinary picture-book ; it is really and truly what it professes to be—an *Instructive Picture-book*. Look, for instance, at plate 11, at the *picture* of the Giraffe by J. B. The various attitudes of the creatures there represented are exceedingly well done—life-like—almost *Wolf-like*, if we may use the expression. Then turn to p. 26 of the letter-press, and read the description of the “noble creature with its finely waved neck, and its curious head with the large languishing eye and dark eyelids.” The Brown Rat, too (plate 7), is good, and the descriptive letter-press at p. 20 is full of interesting information. Gloves, the author tells us, are made of rats’ skins ; and we can, from personal knowledge, vouch for their fine, soft texture and quality. The manufacture, we believe, is chiefly in Paris, where rats are more abundant than they are in London. In plate 12 we have the little Alderney Cow, and the intelligent and inquisitive-looking West Highland Bull ; he is a good sample of the ruminating animals ; and Mr. White’s description of him, of the little Alderney, and the *Cow* in general, indeed, at p. 26, is well worthy of a perusal. Many little bits of valuable information may be derived from reading the descriptive letter-press, which we would strongly advise the young, for whose use this book is so carefully got up, not to skip over. Thus, in the description of plate 13, under the heading “Fallow Deer,” p. 28, we read the following fact, which all may not be acquainted with, and the explanation of it:—“When Deer drink, they can plunge their heads into water almost up to the eyes ; for, besides the nostrils, they have two breathing-places, one at the corner of each eye, which they can open at will : when they are hard run, these spiracles, as they are called, assist them much in breathing.” We may perhaps prefer the illustrations of the Quadrupeds in this book to those of the Birds. Plate 17, however, the *picture* of the Parrot race, is very striking ; and Mr. White, at p. 33, is very happy in his description of the species represented. So is he also at p. 43, in describing the common Cock and Hen. Plate 25 and the Frontispiece, representing Sea-birds, are plates which will be sure to please the young ; while the author’s description of them at p. 49, with his recollections of the animated scenes of the Bass Rock and the Shetland Isles, cannot fail to arrest their attention and fix them upon these interesting animals.

Mr. White’s style of writing is very pleasing, and exceedingly well adapted for young people. There are no tiresome descriptions of animals ; but the minds of his juvenile readers are led as it were imperceptibly to a knowledge of the creatures figured in the plates, and thus to take an interest in them. We would recommend him, however, to avoid *puns* ; for although his manner of conveying in-

formation is playful and jocose, such as a child would like to read, his puns are not good; nor are they such as his model, the late Charles Lamb, would care to have attached to his name. Speaking, for instance, of the Kangaroo, Mr. White says that the flying leaps of the great Boomer Kangaroo were found to measure 15 feet, "each hop being as regular as if the ground had been stepped over by a drill-sergeant. Charles Lamb," he adds, "would have called him a hopeful subject"! His language, too, in some places, is rather ambiguous. The notice of the Green Lizard, for instance, is very interesting—"a harmless and very pretty creature, which delights to bask in the sun, as if it wanted its cold blood warmed with the genial rays;" but we never knew before that this pretty little reptile could either admire, with a painter's eye, a beautiful landscape, or, like a skilful botanist or entomologist, collect plants or insects!—and yet our author says, "Jersey abounds in lizards; for I saw them nearly everywhere as I rested, *admiring the views, or picking up wild flowers and insects.*" Of course it was the author who did so; but, from the allocation of the words, and the punctuation, it appears as if it were the lizard that admired the prospect and picked up the wild plants.

In his preface, Mr. White gives us to understand that this volume is to be followed by another, containing "some of the more striking objects of Zoology." We shall be glad to see him again. From the title-page, it appears that this is the third edition of this work. It deserves such encouragement; for it is carefully got up, the descriptive letter-press contains much valuable information, which even *adults* may enjoy and be improved by, and the illustrations, which are generally upon a large scale, are sure to please the young, and give a good idea of the most striking characteristics of quadrupeds and the gay plumage of birds. At the end of the book there is appended a scientific index and a kind of tabular arrangement of great part of the animal kingdom. These must be very useful both to the general reader and to the teacher or parent who may use the book. To them and to all concerned in the education of young people, we strongly recommend this "Instructive Picture Book."

PROCEEDINGS OF LEARNED SOCIETIES.

ROYAL SOCIETY.

December 16, 1858.—Sir Benjamin C. Brodie, Bart., President, in the Chair.

"Description of a mutilated skull of a large Marsupial Carnivore (*Thylacoleo Carnifex*, Ow.), from a conglomerate stratum, eighty miles S.W. of Melbourne, Australia." By Professor R. Owen, F.R.S., &c.

In this paper the author gives a description of a fossil skull and certain of the teeth of a quadruped of the size of a lion, in which he